Music to watch the clouds pass by on a windless day

For seven players

Full score

Pilar Miralles

Akademie kontemporär – Ensemble Ascolta

Hamburg, September 2023

Music to watch the clouds pass by on a windless day

Pilar Miralles – 2023

Instrumentation: classical guitar, Clarinet in B flat, piano, percussion, soprano sax, violoncello and harp

Duration: 8' ca. version (times could be multiplied proportionally for any desired duration)

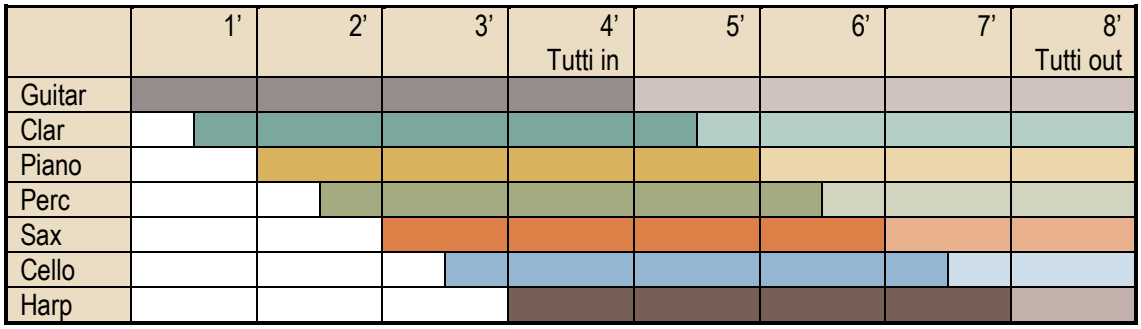
Transposing score

How to perform the piece

A piece to *exist slowly, softly, like these trees, like a puddle of water, like the red bench in the streetcar* (J. P. Sartre, *Nausea*). A piece to give up on the expectation of daily rates of production, consumption, optimization; to lie down on the ground, and *watch the clouds pass by on a windless day.* A piece to just *stay* and perceive.

In this piece, each instrument plays random excerpts from a given list, starting in the order indicated in the following chart until everyone is playing. When half of the time has passed, each player is invited to abandon their seat and *lie on the ground* to *watch the clouds* in the order shown in the chart. The piece is over when everyone is lying down. Each player will have a certain material to play when sitting and when lying down (and, in this later case, it is advisable to learn the excerpts by heart. It is not much to remember anyway). Instructions on how to perform each part are indicated on each score.

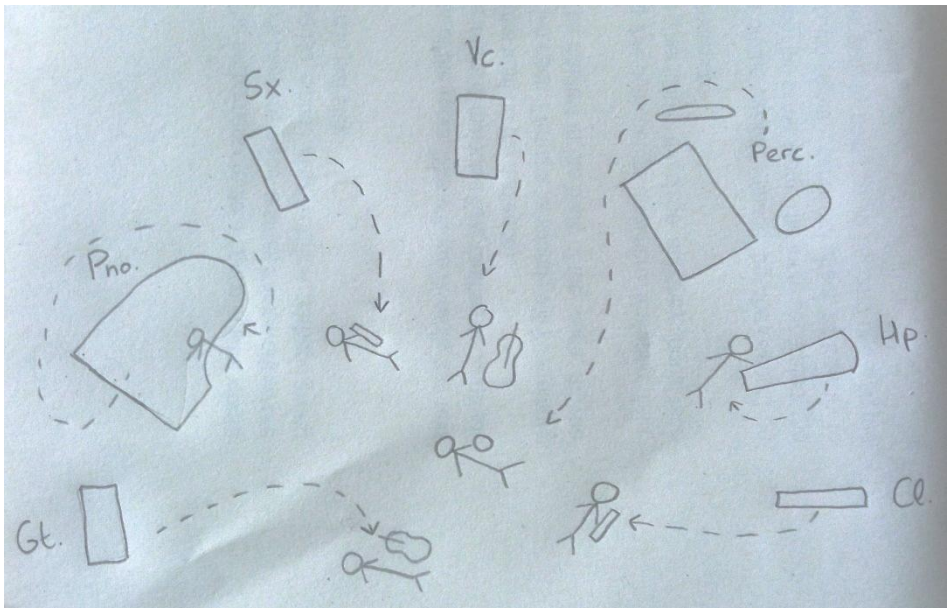
Solid color: Material to play while sitting **Faded color:** Material to play while lying down



This is an 8-minute version of the piece, which could occupy any amount of time by shortening or lengthening the durations proportionally (a 16-minute version has proven to feel quite natural as well). Time shouldn't be something to be exactly measured in this piece, as it deals with the concept of vertical time. Performers should be aware of who comes in and goes lying before them, and feel the time left out in between these events. The piece is not supposed to need a conductor. The following chart indicates the referential times to get in and go lie down for each player in an 8-minute version (indicated in each individual part as a cue):

	Time to start playing	Time to go lie down	Time to fade out
Guitar	0’ 00”	4’ 00”	8’ 00”
Clar	0’ 30”	4’ 30”	8’ 00”
Piano	1’ 00”	5’ 00”	8’ 00”
Perc	1’ 30”	5’ 30”	8’ 00”
Sax	2’ 00”	6’ 00”	8’ 00”
Cello	2’ 30”	6’ 30”	8’ 00”
Harp	3’ 00”	7’ 00”	8’ 00”

Regarding the disposition of the players on the stage, it will depend on the available space, but the ideal situation would be to form a semicircle for the players to sit down, leaving the space in the center for those who can move with their instrument to lie down on the second half of the piece. Depending on the acoustics of the venue, performers can leave more or less space in between them. A bigger space will increase the time needed to move. If available, pillows or mats could be set for each player lying down, although this will create a certain expectation for the audience. It could look like this, for instance (in scenarios other than the conventional stage, players could be distributed among the audience both when sitting and lying down, and the audience could be equally invited to lie down and *watch the clouds* with them):



As a general rule to be insisted on, sounds should be performed as softly and gently as possible. The general atmosphere should be quiet and still, even if all performers are playing at the same time. Movements on the stage should be performed calmly and slowly. Performers should take off their shoes (and wear socks) to performer this piece. Silent gaps between materials are welcome and listening to others is a must. The dynamic level should be similar for all instruments and no one should be highlighted over the others.

Stay. Enjoy the clouds.

A few remarks about the performance

General

As mentioned earlier, it would be ideal to place seven pillows or yoga mats (or both) at the spot where each performer is to lie down (including one for the pianist knees), so that the spots are clearly marked over the stage and, in addition, players can comfortably lie down while playing. But this is not mandatory.

It is very important to pay attention to the instrument that will cue the beginning of your sitting and lying down sections (indicated in the first text box of each individual part), especially (and ideally) if playing without counting the exact time with a stopwatch or the like.

Silence is understood here, in most cases, as inactivity, as it might involve leaving resonances that avoid total silence (if such is believed to exist) anyway.

Dynamic indications between quotation marks are applied to some effects where they refer more to the intention of the performer than to the actual sound result.

Piano

Some preparations would ease the performance of the piano part (C4 = middle C):

- The piano rack should be removed to play inside comfortably, and a wooden wedge should be placed in the *sostenuto* pedal to block it so that it is permanently depressed.
- A bit of blue tack on the A5 string (see second excerpt of the *sitting material*), right above the damper in order to obtain the "wooden" percussive sound (the alternative is to completely mute the string with the left-hand index finger after playing the low A).
- Four little stickers on the strings C4, D4 and E4 (see first excerpt of the *lying material*) and on the string F1 (see fourth excerpt of the *sitting material*) so that they are easily found.

Percussion

The percussion set includes the following instruments:

- A set of temple blocks (any size, any number)
- Crotales (one high octave)
- A pair of bongos
- Bass drum (gran cassa) and snare drum
- Tam tam and a pair of cymbals (different sizes)
- For the lying section, an extra instrument to be carried by the performer should be chosen among the given list: a rain stick or seed pod shakers or rattles, or a tambourine or woodblock (other options to experiment with are indicated at the end of the percussion part).

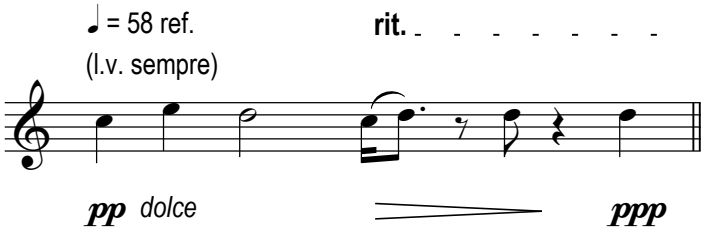
Mallets and objects to play with include: a medium-size coin, a bow, a hard vibraphone mallet, a pair of soft mallets (for tam tam and for cymbals), and, if the membrane of the bass drum is not made of skin, possibly a bundle of dry branches or a thick brush (like a barber brush, for instance) as an alternative (if the nails still work well, they could still be used).

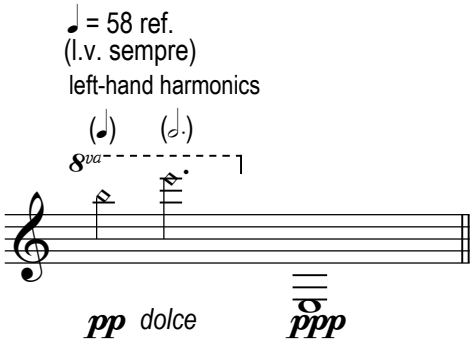
Classical guitar

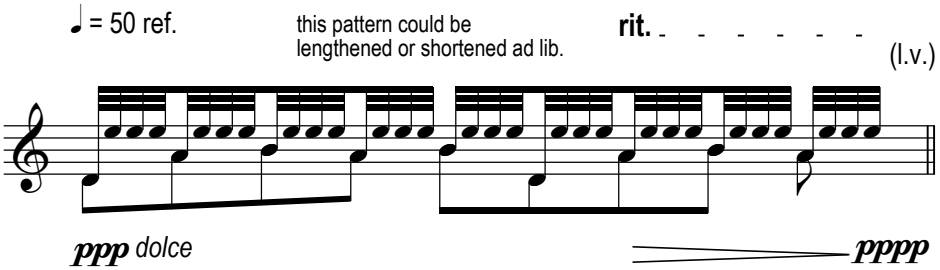
Music to watch the clouds pass by on a windless day

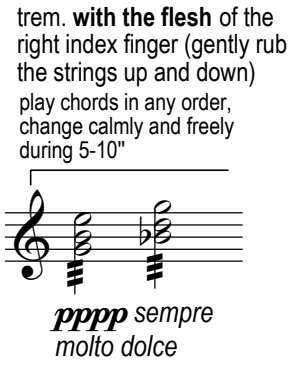
Sitting material: From the beginning of the piece (0' 00")
Lying material: Approx. 1' after harp starts playing (4' 00")

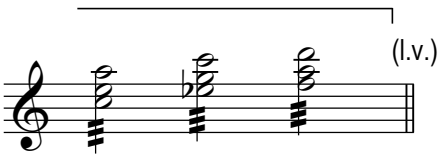
SITTING MATERIAL - SHOES OFF!
Choose freely among the following excerpts in any order, at any time.You may link up to two (different) excerpts in a row. After playing one or two excerpts, a gap of 5-10" of inactivity will be left. You may repeat any excerpt. Play softly, gently, calmly. Play independently, but listen to others. All tempos and durations are only given as a reference and should be interpreted freely.

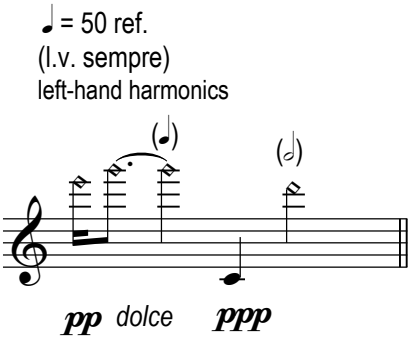


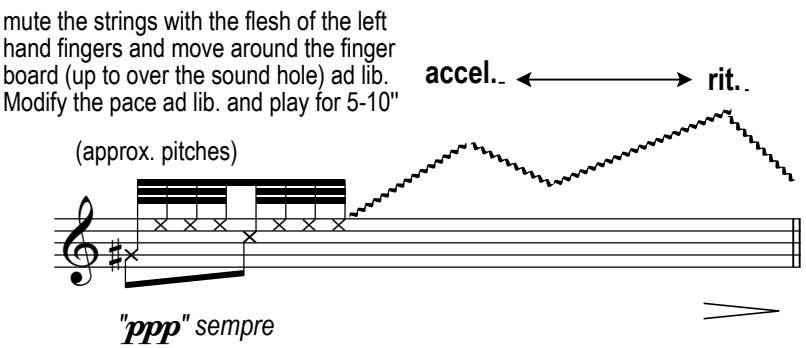





trem. with the flesh of the right index finger (gently rub the strings up and down)
play chords in any order, change calmly and freely during 5-10"
pppp sempre molto dolce





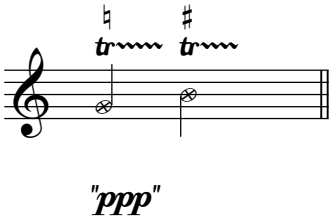

mute the strings with the flesh of the left hand fingers and move around the finger board (up to over the sound hole) ad lib. Modify the pace ad lib. and play for 5-10"
accel.
rit.
(approx. pitches)
"ppp" sempre

If my complaints could passions move...

♩ = 50 ref.

you may leave the melody
incomplete ad lib.

rest the side of the right
hand on the strings to mute
them. Perform a trill with the
left hand (tap and pull the string)
alternate ad lib., sustain for 2-5" each
and the entire passage for around 10"



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LYING MATERIAL
Go watch the clouds pass by: take your instrument with you, walk calmly to the space in the center of the stage in front of your seat and lie down. You may either lie down holding your instrument onto you, or lie sideways placing your instrument on the floor next to you. The piece ends approx. 1' after all instruments have lain down (harp is the last one). When this moment arrives, simply fade out calmly.

pluck **any** open string or open string harmonic
(if possible due to posture) gently and calmly.
Improvise with combinations of durations of 2-3"
and 5-7". You can also leave longer silent gaps

left-hand harmonics

Clarinet in B♭

Music to watch the clouds pass by on a windless day

Sitting material: Approx. 30" after guitar starts playing (0' 30")
Lying material: Approx. 30" after guitar lies down (4' 30")

SITTING MATERIAL - SHOES OFF!
Choose freely among the following excerpts in any order, at any time.You may link up to two (different) excerpts in a row. After playing one or two excerpts, a gap of 5-10" of inactivity will be left. You may repeat any excerpt. Play softly, gently, calmly. Play independently, but listen to others. All tempos and durations are only given as a reference and should be interpreted freely.

alternate ad lib., sustain for 2-5" each and the entire passage for around 10". Breathe when needed

a bit airy

trem with r.h.'s ring finger

ppp *dolce e legato*

Habanera I...

♩ = 92 ref.

you may leave the melody incomplete ad lib.

almost like subtones

ppp *dolce e legato*

add the G# key to the D fingering to obtain the following dyad multiphonic (approx. pitches)

either try to maintain the multiphonic, or alternate between both pitches by modifying the air pressure. Sustain for 5-10". Breathe when needed

*"**ppp**" sempre*

alternate ad lib. between these pitches creating sort of a slow melody. Leave any silent gaps in between and play for around 10". Breathe when needed

subtones (almost inaudible pitch)

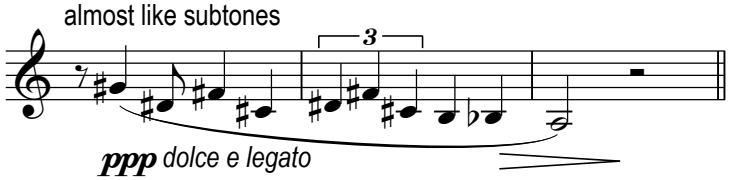
pppp *legato sempre*

Habanera II...

♩ = 92 ref.

you may leave the melody incomplete ad lib.

almost like subtones



ppp *dolce e legato*

alternate ad lib., sustain for 2-5" each and the entire passage for around 10". Breathe when needed

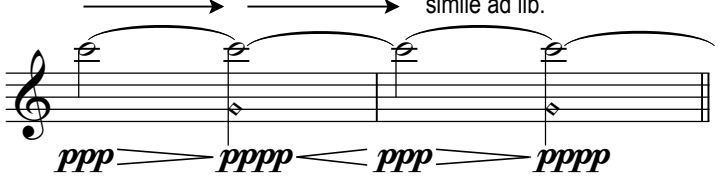
a bit airy

ppp *dolce e legato*

obtain the "underblown" harmonic by keeping the upper note fingering and reducing the air pressure. Fluctuate slowly and ad lib. for 5-10". Breathe when needed

recover air pressure

simile ad lib.



ppp ***pppp*** ***ppp*** ***pppp***

alternate ad lib. between these pitches creating sort of a slow melody. Leave any silent gaps in between and play for around 10". Breathe when needed.

subtones (almost inaudible pitch)

pppp *legato sempre*

- B♭ clarinet -

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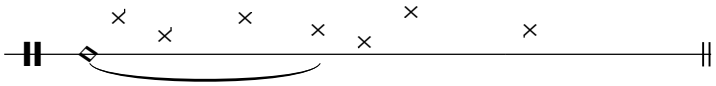
LYING MATERIAL
Go watch the clouds pass by: take your instrument with you, walk calmly to the space in the center of the stage in front of your seat and lie down. Play the instrument while lying down. Same instructions as in the sitting section can be applied here. The piece ends approx. 1' after all instruments have lain down (harp is the last one). When this moment arrives, simply finish your current passage and fade out calmly.

breathe out calmly (only air, start perhaps from a rather closed position) and perform some sporadic key clicks (accel-rit) while breathing and afterwards. Repeat several times leaving silent gaps in between just like in the sitting section and breathe when needed

you can also separate both elements into **two different materials** (air only, key clicks only)



*"**ppp**" sempre*

Piano

Music to watch the clouds pass by on a windless day

Sitting material: Approx. 30" after clarinet starts playing (1' 00")
Lying material: Approx. 30" after clarinet lies down (5' 00")
The lid of the piano should be open. The music rack should be removed, if possible, to access the inside of the piano. A wooden wedge should be placed in the sostenuto pedal to block it.

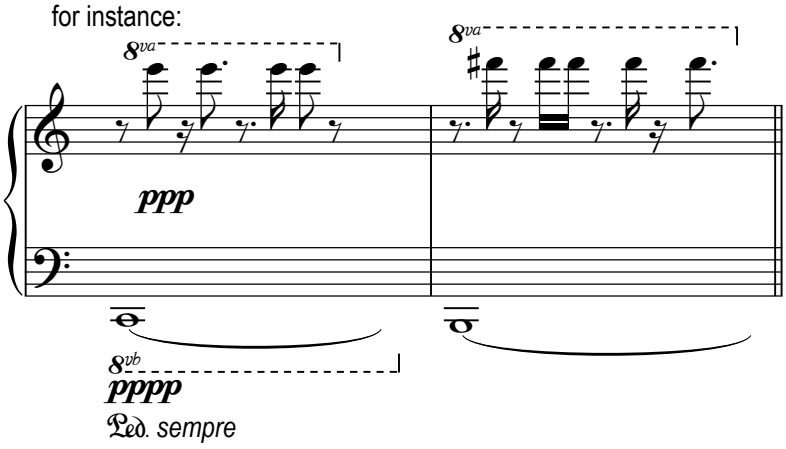
SITTING MATERIAL - SHOES OFF!
Choose freely among the following excerpts in any order, at any time. You may link up to two (different) excerpts in a row. After playing one or two excerpts, a gap of 5-10" of inactivity will be left. You may repeat any excerpt. Play softly, gently, calmly. Play independently, but listen to others. All tempos and durations are only given as a reference and should be interpreted freely.

if possible, prepare the piano with a bit of **blue tack** on the A5 strings (right above the damper) to mute them and obtain a "wooden" percussive sound (**otherwise**, just completely mute the strings with the left hand after playing the low A)

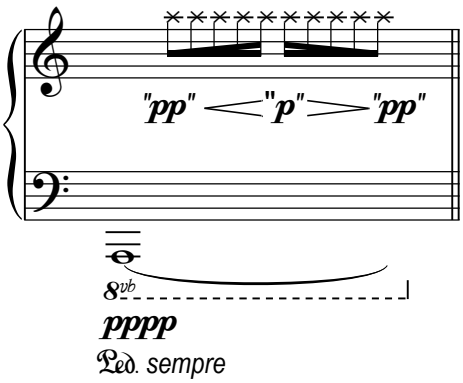
alternate between both pitches ad lib. in each hand (combine ad lib.). This rhythm is just an example: you can shorten or lengthen it before switching pitches. Play the material for around 10"

♩ = 58 ref.

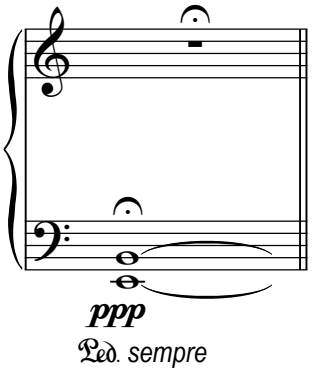
for instance:



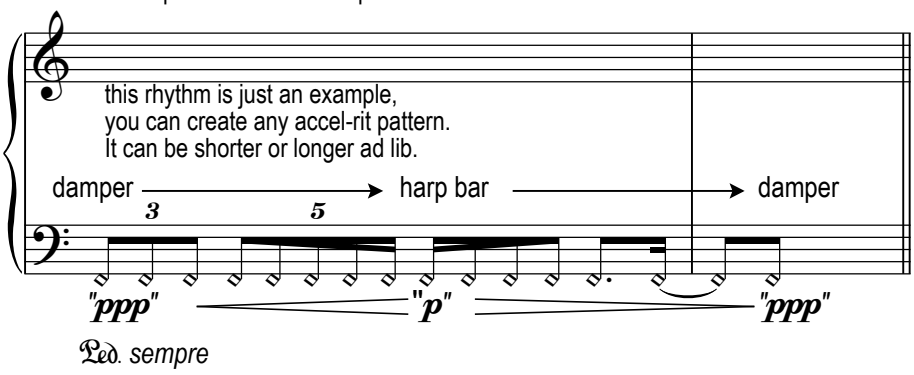
after playing the low A, repeat the r.h. figure shortening or lengthening it ad lib. during 5-10". You may also leave silent gaps in between



l.v. until all the resonance is gone

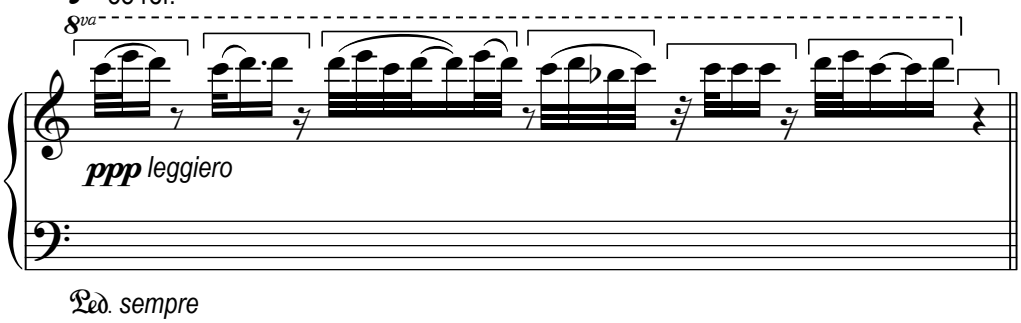


muted strings (r.h.): Gently slide the fleshy part of the finger over the strings in the space below the damper

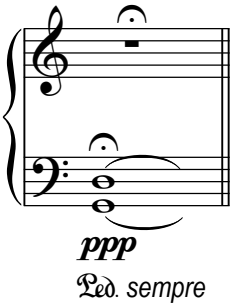


combine the framed motives ad lib. for 5-10" in any order. You may repeat them and also leave longer silent gaps in between. Feel free to create other combinations of rhythm and pitches

♩ = 58 ref.



l.v. until all the resonance is gone



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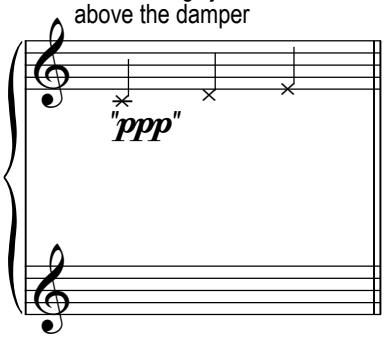
LYING MATERIAL
Go watch the clouds pass by: as you can't take your instrument with you, close the fallboard gently, and rest on your knees on the side of the instrument. This will be your way of laying down. Same instructions as in the sitting section can be applied here. The piece ends approx. 1' after all instruments have lain down (harp is the last one). When this moment arrives, simply finish your current passage and fade out calmly.

ALTERNATIVE
There is an additional option for the lying material which could, indeed, involve lying on the floor. In this case, lie down next to the keyboard. Materials to be played from this possition include gently knocking with a knuckle under the keyboard and playing very softly random pitches from the highest octave, creating slow melodies during 5-10".

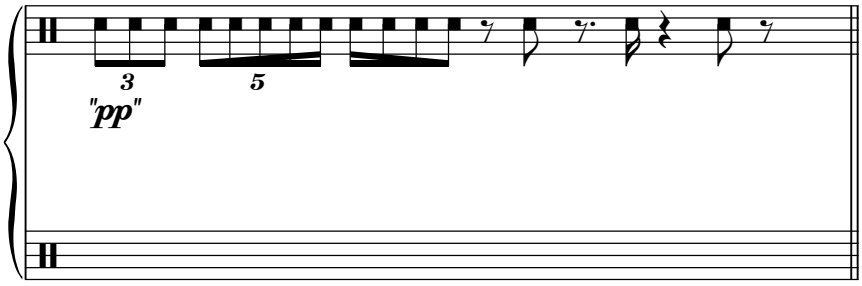
combine the pitches ad lib.
creating sort of a slow melody.
Play for around 5-10".

pizz. with the flesh of the finger (r.h.): play directly on the strings just a bit above the damper



Ped. sempre

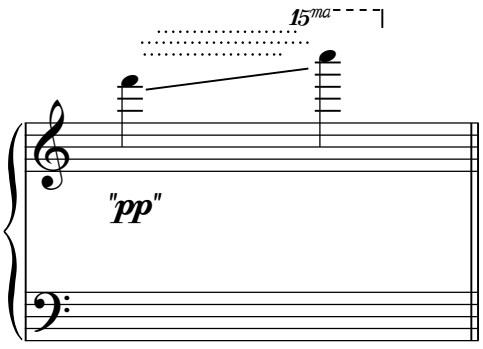
gently hit the side of a bar* of the piano's harp with a knuckle. This rhythm is just an example. Repeat the figure shortening or lengthening it ad lib. for around 5-10"



Ped. sempre

* Try to reach the bar situated more or less in the middle of the piano's harp. It will depend on the model of the piano if such a bar is straight and long or oblique and short.

Perform a fast tapping with the nails over the strings that don't have damper (usually, from F6 onwards, see range below). Tap on random pitches avoiding chromatic patterns. Sustain the action for around 5-10".



Ped. sempre

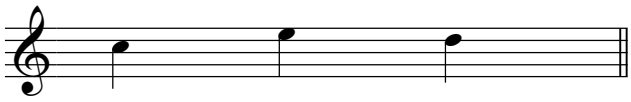
Percussion

Music to watch the clouds pass by on a windless day

Sitting material: Approx. 30" after piano starts playing (1' 30")
Lying material: Approx. 30" after pianist rest on their knees on the side of the piano (5' 30")

SITTING MATERIAL - SHOES OFF!
Choose freely among the following options from the list of percussion "actions" in any order, at any time.You may link up to two (different) actions in a row. After playing one or two actions, a gap of 5-10" of inactivity will be left. You may repeat any of the actions. Play softly, gently, calmly. Play independently, but listen to others. All durations are only given as a reference and should be interpreted freely.

pitches for crotales



List of percussion actions (sustain or repeat each for 5-15"):

- **Set of temple blocks:** gently scratch the surface with the edge of a coin in a slow circular motion or 8-figure to produce a soft and continuous sound. Alternate freely among the available temble blocks.

- **Crotales:** combine the given pitches (C-D-E) in any order creating sort of a slow melody. Play as soft as possible combining ad lib. the use of a bow to rub the crotale and a hard vibraphone mallet to softly hit it. L.v. always.

- **Pair of bongos:** gently scratch the surface with the nails in circle motion or 8-figure and slightly varying the speed (although maintaining a soft dynamic at all times). A coin could also be used (on its flat side) to gently scratch the surface.

- **Bass drum and snare drum:** gently scratch the surface of the bass drum with the nails (of one or two hands) in a slow circular motion or 8-figure. If the membrane is not made of skin, the nails might not sound good. Other option then is to softly and gently scratch the surface with a soft brush. The snare drum can be slightly scratched with a harsher brush by pressing against the membrane (snares off) to produce crackling sounds.

- **Tam tam and cymbals:** alternate ad lib. between the instruments hitting them gently with the knuckle and performing short, very soft rolls with soft mallets. L.v. always.

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LYING MATERIAL
Go watch the clouds pass by: take the chosen instrument with you, walk calmly to the space in the center of the stage in front of your seat and lie down. Play the instrument while lying down. The piece ends approx. 1' after all instruments have lain down (harp is the last one). When this moment arrives, simply fade out calmly.

Choose **one** of the following options (depending on the available instruments) to bring with you and play while lying down. Any of the chosen materials should be combined with silent gaps just like in the sitting section:

- **Rain stick** (maybe a small one): turn the instrument upside-down very slowly to produce a subtle sound. Maybe some kind of **shaker** (especially seed pod shakers or rattles) being turned around could produce a similar effect.

- **Tambourine**: use a coin on its flat side to gently rub the surface of the tambourine drawing circles or an 8-figure. Alternatively, the nails can be use to softly scracth the surface. Otherwise, the coin can be used on a **woodblock** in the same manner (gently scratching with the edge of the coin in this case).

- **Other options** to try, if any is available, are: a small güiro to play slowly and softly, some kind of small drum (such as a coconut drum) to gently play sporadic groups of soft strokes, a pair of claves to rub against each other or play soft sporadic strokes, or a kalimba to play a soft and slow random melody, leaving sporadic silent gaps in between.

Soprano saxophone

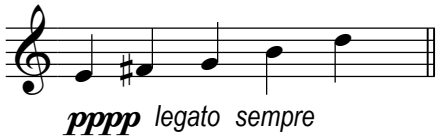
Music to watch the clouds pass by on a windless day

Sitting material: Approx. 30" after percussion starts playing (2' 00")
Lying material: Approx. 30" after percussion lies down (6' 00")

SITTING MATERIAL - SHOES OFF!
Choose freely among the following excerpts in any order, at any time.You may link up to two (different) excerpts in a row. After playing one or two excerpts, a gap of 5-10" of inactivity will be left. You may repeat any excerpt. Play softly, gently, calmly. Play independently, but listen to others. All tempos and durations are only given as a reference and should be interpreted freely.

alternate ad lib. between these pitches creating sort of a slow melody. Leave any silent gaps in between and play for around 10". Breathe when needed

subtones (almost inaudible pitch)



Habanera I...

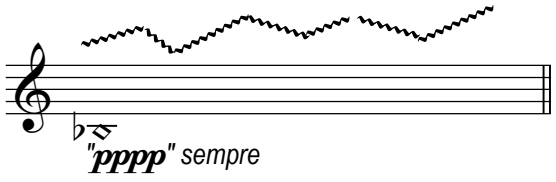
♩ = 92 ref.

you may leave the melody incomplete ad lib.

almost like subtones

air overtones

play with air fluctuating freely between the overtones. Soft traces of sound may appear once in a while. Sustain for 5-10". You can also leave sporadic silent gaps in between and breathe when needed.



alternate ad lib. between these pitches creating sort of a slow melody. Leave any silent gaps in between and play for around 10". Breathe when needed

subtones (almost inaudible pitch)

Habanera II...

♩ = 92 ref.

you may leave the melody incomplete ad lib.

almost like subtones

alternate ad lib., sustain for 2-5" each and the entire passage for around 10". Breathe when needed

a bit airy

trem. with Eb key

*****

Violoncello

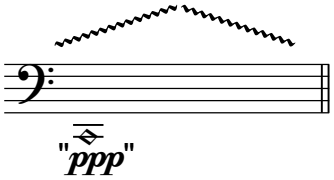
Music to watch the clouds pass by on a windless day

Sitting material: Approx. 30" after sax starts playing (2' 30")
Lying material: Approx. 30" after sax lies down (6' 30")

SITTING MATERIAL - SHOES OFF!
Choose freely among the following excerpts in any order, at any time.You may link up to two (different) excerpts in a row. After playing one or two excerpts, a gap of 5-10" of inactivity will be left. You may repeat any excerpt. Play softly, gently, calmly. Play independently, but listen to others. All tempos and durations are only given as a reference and should be interpreted freely.

gliss. with open harmonics for 5-10". Go very slowly up and down over the C string touching the string slightly to get the open harmonics. Change direction ad lib.

molto sul pont.



Habanera ...

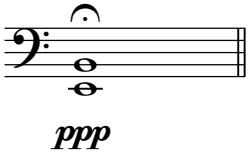
♩ = 92 ref.

you may leave the melody incomplete ad lib.

alomst no vib.
molto sul pont.
flautato

Sustain the chord for aorund 10". Fluctuate between different bow pressures keeping the soft dynamic.

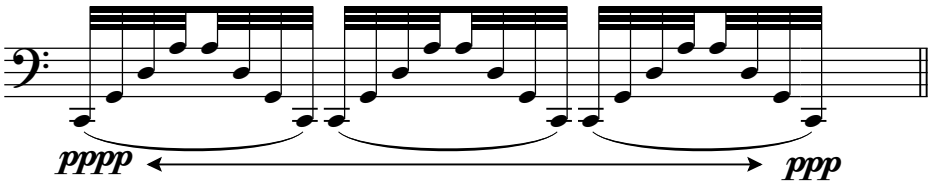
non vib.
molto sul tasto



♩ = 60 ref.

Repeat the passage between 1-3 times. Change bow position and dynamic ad lib. between the indicated scope. Accel. and rall. ad lib.

poco sul pont. ⟷ molto sul pont.



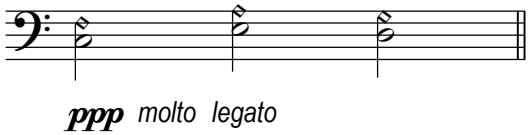
air noise effect: mute the string lightly and use very light bow pressure. Sustain for around 10"

(sul C)

♩ = 50 ref.

alternate ad lib. between these pitches creating sort of a slow melody. Leave sporadit silent gaps and play for around 10"

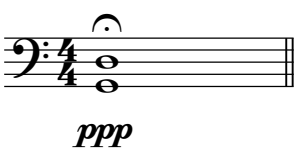
poco sul tasto
(non vib.)



Sustain the chord for around 10". Fluctuate between different bow pressures keeping the soft dynamic.

non vib.
molto sul tasto

(sul C-G)



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LYING MATERIAL
Go watch the clouds pass by: take your instrument with you, walk calmly to the space in the center of the stage in front of your seat and lie down. You may either lie down holding your instrument onto you, or lie sideways placing your instrument on the floor next to you. The piece ends approx. 1' after all instruments have lain down (harp is the last one). When this moment arrives, simply fade out calmly.

perform pizz on **any** open string ad lib. gently and calmly. Improvise with combinations of durations of 2-3" and 5-7". You can also leave longer silent gaps

pizz.
(l.v. sempre)

ppp *sempre*

Harp

Music to watch the clouds pass by on a windless day

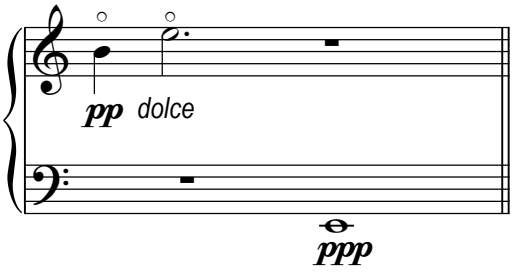
Sitting material: Approx. 30" after cello starts playing (3' 00")
Lying material: Approx. 30" after cello lies down (7' 00")

SITTING MATERIAL - SHOES OFF!
Choose freely among the following excerpts in any order, at any time.You may link up to two (different) excerpts in a row. After playing one or two excerpts, a gap of 5-10" of inactivity will be left. You may repeat any excerpt. Play softly, gently, calmly. Play independently, but listen to others. All tempos and durations are only given as a reference and should be interpreted freely.

♩ = 58 ref.
(l.v. sempre)

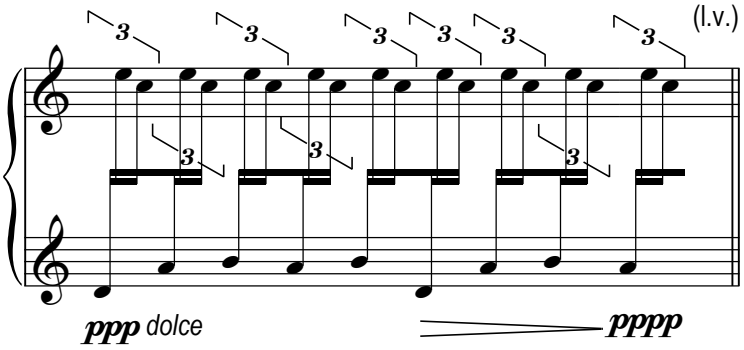
rit. - - - - - - -

♩ = 58 ref.
(l.v. sempre)
octave harmonics

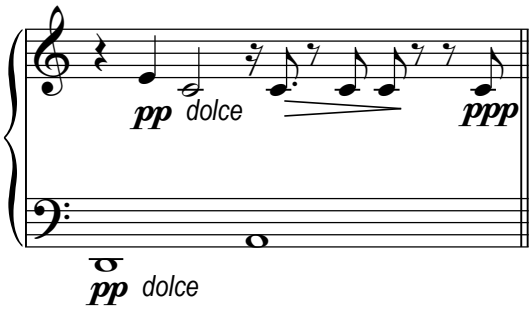


♩ = 58 ref.
this pattern could be lengthened or shortened ad lib.
rit. - - - - -

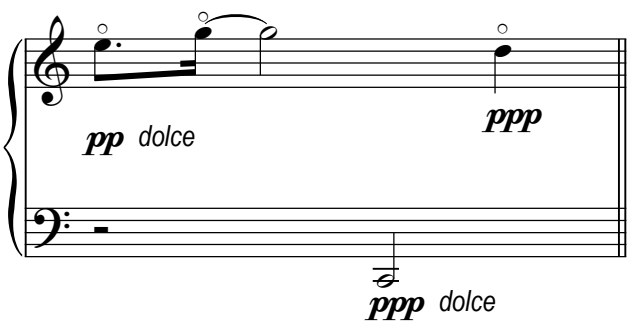
(l.v.)



♩ = 58 ref.
(l.v. sempre)
rit. - - - - -

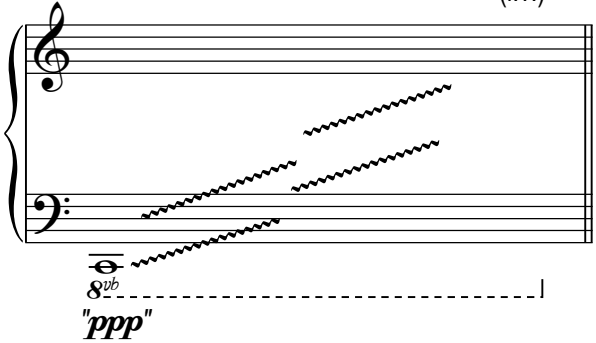


♩ = 50 ref.
(l.v. sempre)
octave harmonics



phantom gliss.
slowly alternate between both hands performing a gliss. with the palm to produce a soft and muffled sound (range: 2-3 octaves at most). Play the material for 5-10"

(l.v.)



- harp -

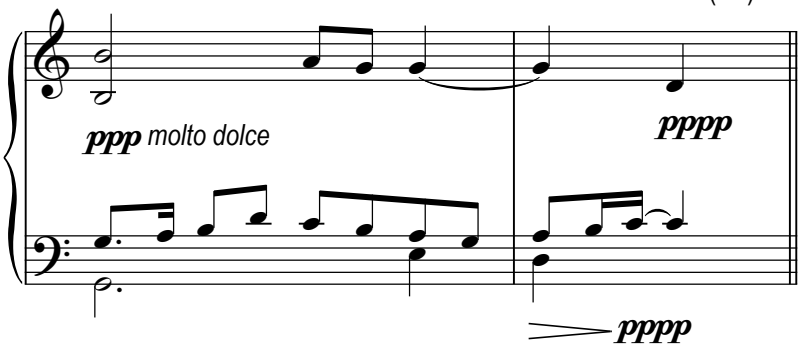
If my complaints could passions move...

♩ = 50 ref.

you may leave the melody incomplete ad lib.

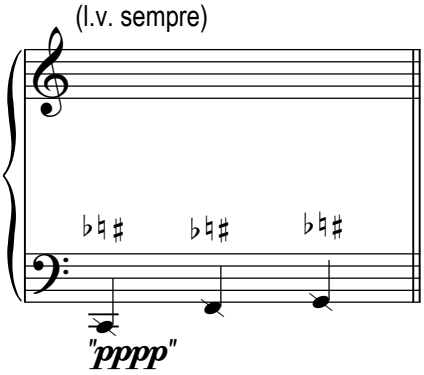
rit. - - - - -

(l.v.)



change the pedal of these pitches ad lib. without plucking the string. Let ring the subtle sound produced by the pedal change. Wait for 2-3" between each change and play the material for about 10" (make sure to come back to the natural position when the passage is over)

(l.v. sempre)



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LYING MATERIAL

Go watch the clouds pass by: leave your instrument resting in its upright position and lie down next to it, so that you can access some of the low strings with a hand. You may either lie down facing up or lie sideways. After you lie down, all performers will play alongside you for one more minute. After this, fade out calmly with the rest of the performers. The piece is then concluded.

pluck **any** available string (diatonic scale) from your position gently and calmly. Improvise with combinations of durations of 2-3" and 5-7". You can also leave longer silent gaps

(l.v. sempre)

...and upwards ad libitum